



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov



APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/615,720	07/08/2003	Sotaro Oda	FUJZ 20.498	9424
26304	7590	08/02/2007	EXAMINER	
KATTEN MUCHIN ROSENMAN LLP 575 MADISON AVENUE NEW YORK, NY 10022-2585				JEAN GILLES, JUDE
ART UNIT		PAPER NUMBER		
2143				
MAIL DATE		DELIVERY MODE		
08/02/2007		PAPER		

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	10/615,720	ODA ET AL.	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	Jude J. Jean-Gilles	2143	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 25 April 2007.
 2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.
 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 1-3,5,6 and 8-21 is/are pending in the application.
 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
 5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
 6) Claim(s) 1-3,5,6 and 8-21 is/are rejected.
 7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
 8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
 10) The drawing(s) filed on 08 July 2003 is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
 2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
 3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
 Paper No(s)/Mail Date 08/10/2005.

4) Interview Summary (PTO-413)
 Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
 5) Notice of Informal Patent Application
 6) Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

This office action is responsive to communication filed on 04/25/2007. Claimed priority is granted from foreign application Priority No. 2002-237247 with an effective filing date of 08/16/2002.

Information Disclosure Statement

1. The references listed on the Information Disclosure Statement submitted on 08/10/2005 and 07/08/2003, have been considered by the examiner (see attached PTO-1449A).

Response to Amendment/Arguments

2. In the claims, 1-3, 5-6, and 8-21 remain pending in the application with claims 1 and 6 amended and claims 4 and 7 cancelled herein. Claims 1-49 represent a method and apparatus for an "LAN SWITCHING METHOD AND LAN SWITCH."

Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1 and 6 have been carefully considered, but are not deemed fully persuasive. Applicant's arguments are deemed moot in view of the existing ground of rejection as explained here below. Applicants' amendments to the independent claims are not properly made and as to perhaps place them in condition for allowance.

The dependent claims stand rejected as articulated in the First Office Action and all objections not addressed in Applicant's response are herein reiterated.

In response to Applicant's arguments, 37 CFR § 1.11(c) requires applicant to "clearly point out the patentable novelty which he or she thinks the claims present in view of the state of the art disclosed by the references cited or the objections made. He or she must show the amendments avoid such references or objections."

Applicant's Request for Reconsideration filed on 04/25/2007 has been carefully considered but is not deemed fully persuasive. However, because there exists the likelihood of future presentation of this argument, the Examiner thinks that it is prudent to address Applicants' main points of contention:

Applicant contends that the office action alleges that Frantz discloses a LAN switching method of claim 1 comprising a first step of establishing a plurality of VLAN's different from each other for a single group composed of a plurality of members, and ,a second step of mapping frames from the members to a predetermined VLAN selected from among the VLAN's. Applicant therefore submits that Frantz fails to teach or suggest that each of the plurality of VLAN groups or a single VLAN group is established with a plurality of VLAN's as claimed in claims 1 and 6 and shown in Figs. 2-4. In the frame format shown in Fig. 5 of Frantz no VLAN's are mapped among a single VLAN group, namely that Frantz fails to disclose or suggest a technical idea of VLAN group itself.

It is the position of the Examiner that Lee in detail teaches the limitations of the above mentioned claims. However, in view of Applicant's remarks, The Office respectfully concludes that the applicant mischaracterizes the teachings of Frantz and that the argument above is moot. Fig. 2 of Frantz discloses data network 10 that using a

single network switch 200 and virtual local area networks (VLANs) to create multiple broadcast domains 11 and 12. Such VLANs are generally configured based on the points where the physical LANs enter a switched network. For example, network switch 200 is configured such that ports 201 through 203 and 207 belong to VLAN 210, and ports 204-206 belong to VLAN 220. LAN segments 103, 110 and 120 coupled to ports 201-203, respectively, belong to VLAN 210. LAN segments 130, 140 and 105 coupled to ports 204, 207, and 205, respectively, belong to VLAN 220. The configuration of data network 10 in FIG. 2A. Obviously, these are groups of VLANs that are established with a plurality of VLANs. Furthermore, Frantz teaches that as it is desirable to segment data traffic into groups of virtual local area networks (VLANs), as discussed above, mapping the frame format of the VLANs members to a predetermine VLAN selected in the group. (see column 2, lines 60-67, continue in column 3, lines 1-16; column 7, lines 10-45).

Examiner notes that no new matter has been added and that the new claims are supported by the application as filed. However, applicant has failed in presenting claims and drawings that delineate the contours of this invention as compared to the cited prior art. Applicant has failed to clearly point out patentable novelty in view of the state of the art disclosed by the references cited that would overcome the 102(e) anticipation and the 103(a) rejections applied against the claims, the rejection is therefore sustained.

Claim Objections

3. Claim 5 is objected to because of the following informalities: Claim 5 improperly

depends on claim 4 which has been deleted. In order to proceed with the examination of the claim, the Examiner assumes claim 5 depends on claim 4. Appropriate correction is required.

Claim 9 is objected to because of the following informalities: Claim 9 improperly depends on claim 7 which has been deleted. In order to proceed with the examination of the claim, the Examiner assumes claim 9 depends on claim 8. Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

4. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless -

((b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

5. **Claims 1, 2, 6, and 12-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Frantz et al (Frantz), Patent No. 6,111,876.**

Regarding **claim 1**, Frantz discloses a LAN switching (figs. 5 a, and b) method comprising:

a first step of establishing a plurality of VLAN's different from each other for a single VLAN group composed of a plurality of members (column 7, lines 22-31), and

a second step of mapping frames from the members to a

predetermined VLAN selected from among the VLAN's (column 7, lines 22-31; column 10, lines 55-66).

Regarding **claim 2**, Frantz discloses the LAN switching method as claimed in claim 1, further comprising, between the first and the second steps, a third step of mapping a received frame to the group to which a source member of the frame belongs, based on information of the frame received (column 7, lines 22-45),

the second step mapping the frame to a predetermined VLAN selected from among a plurality of VLAN's of the group to which the frame has been mapped (column 7, lines 22-31; column 10, lines 55-66).

Regarding **claim 6**, Frantz discloses a LAN switch comprising:

a VLAN table for associating a plurality of different VLAN's with a single VLAN group composed of a plurality of members (column 7, lines 22-31), and a VLAN mapping portion for mapping frames from the members to a predetermined VLAN selected from the VLAN table (column 7, lines 22-31; column 10, lines 55-66).

Regarding **claim 12**, Frantz discloses the LAN switch as claimed in claim 6, further comprising a

VLAN group table for associating information of a frame with the

group to which a source member of the frame belongs (Frantz; column 7, lines 22-45), and a VLAN group mapping portion for mapping a received frame to an associated group based on information of the frame by looking up the VLAN group table (Frantz; column 4, lines 54-67),

the VLAN mapping portion mapping the frame to a predetermined VLAN of the group selected from the VLAN table(column 7, lines 22-31; column 10, lines 55-66).

Regarding **claim 13**, Frantz discloses the LAN switch as claimed in claim 6, further comprising a line fault detector for detecting a line fault on each VLAN,

the VLAN mapping portion mapping the frame to a predetermined VLAN based on fault information from the line fault detector (column 7, lines 22-31; column 10, lines 55-66).

Regarding **claim 14**, Frantz discloses the LAN switch as claimed in claim 6 wherein the VLAN mapping portion sequentially maps the frame to each VLAN per frame (column 7, lines 22-31; column 10, lines 55-66).

Regarding **claim 15**, Frantz discloses the LAN switch as claimed in claim 6 wherein the VLAN mapping portion maps the frame to a VLAN different from a VLAN to which a frame has been mapped by another LAN switch (column 7, lines 22-31; column 10, lines 55-66).

Regarding **claim 16**, Frantz discloses the LAN switch as mapped by a VLAN mapping portion of claimed in claim 6, further comprising a frame classifier for classifying received frames to a plurality of classes the VLAN mapping portion mapping the

frames to VLAN's associated with the classes (column 7, lines 22-31; column 10, lines 55-66).

Regarding **claim 17**, Frantz discloses the LAN switch as claimed in claim 6, further comprising a path

monitor for monitoring a response on each VLAN,

the VLAN mapping portion mapping a frame, when the path monitor detects a VLAN having a lowered response, having been mapped to the VLAN to another VLAN (column 7, lines 22-31; column 10, lines 55-66)..

Regarding **claim 18**, Frantz discloses the LAN switch as claimed in claim 6, further comprising a path selector for transmitting, when a frame having an IP packet capsuled is received, a ping frame to a member having a destination IP address of the IP packet, and for selecting an optimum VLAN, based on a response time of the transmission, from among a plurality of VLAN's associated with the concerned frame (column 7, lines 22-31; column 10, lines 55-66).,

the VLAN mapping portion mapping the frame having the IP packet capsuled for the IP address to the optimum VLAN.

Regarding **claim 19**, Frantz discloses the LAN switch as claimed in claim 6, further comprising a pause frame storage for monitoring a number of pause frames received on each VLAN, and for notifying the VLAN mapping portion of a VLAN in which the number of pause frames within a predetermined

time exceeds a specified value,
the VLAN mapping portion mapping a frame having been
mapped to the VLAN to another VLAN(column 7, lines 22-31; column 10, lines 55-
66),.

Regarding **claim 20**, Frantz discloses the LAN switch as claimed in claim 6,
further comprising an error frame storage for storing a number of frames including
errors within a predetermined time on whether or not the number has
value, each VLAN, and for determining reached a predetermined specified
the VLAN mapping portion mapping, based on the
determination result, a frame having been mapped to the VLAN
having reached the specified value to another VLAN (column 7, lines 22-31; column 10,
lines 55-66).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

6. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all
obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set
forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and
the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the
invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains.
Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

7. **Claims 3, 5, 8-11, and 21** are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being
unpatentable over Frantz in view of Doherty et al (Doherty) U.S. Patent No. 6,650,639
B2.

Regarding claim 5: Frantz discloses the invention substantially as claimed. Frantz teaches the LAN switching method as claimed in claim 4, but fails to disclose all the details of a LAN switching wherein each path comprises a physical or a logical loopless path.

In the same field of endeavor, Doherty discloses an "...if the two stations are allowed to have a connection, then the server M10 will determine the path of switches to be used to provide a logical connection between M11 and M99. c) Since M11 can reach M99 by two different paths, one "best" path is selected. "Best" is constrained by, for example, cost, bandwidth, policy, loss, and other metrics. d) Let's assume the best path is chosen as traversing S1 to S3 to S5..."[see Doherty; *column 4, lines 5-13*].

Accordingly, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the networking art at the time the invention was made to have incorporated Doherty teachings of a physical path or a loopless logical path with the teachings of Frantz, for the purpose of improving the ability of a network "...to provide a way of reducing the number of connection table entries required so as to in turn reduce the amount of memory required in the secure fast packet switch" as stated by Doherty in lines 55-60 of column 1. By this rationale, **claim 5 is rejected.**

Regarding **claim 3**, the combination Frantz- Doherty discloses the LAN switching method as claimed in claim 1 wherein each path of the VLAN's comprises a physical or a logical loopless path [see Doherty; *column 4, lines 5-13*].

Regarding **claim 8**, the combination Frantz- Doherty discloses the LAN switch as claimed in claim 6 wherein each path of the VLAN's comprises a physical or a logical path [see Doherty; *column 4, lines 5-13*].

Regarding **claim 9**, the combination Frantz- Doherty discloses the LAN switch as claimed in claim 7 wherein each path comprises a physical or a logical path [see Doherty; *column 4, lines 5-13*].

Regarding **claim 10**, the combination Frantz- Doherty discloses the LAN switch as claimed in claim 8 or 9 wherein the path is loopless [see Doherty; *column 4, lines 5-13*].

Regarding **claim 11**, Frantz discloses the LAN switch as claimed in claim 10 wherein the path is selected by a spanning tree protocol [see Doherty; *column 4, lines 5-13*].

Regarding claim 21: the combination Frantz- Doherty discloses the LAN switch as claimed in claim 13, further disclose a LAN switch comprising an alarm processor for broadcasting an alarm transferring frame notifying a VLAN on which a fault has occurred through a designated VLAN, based on an alarm distribution request from the line fault detector (see Frantz; *column 7, lines 22-31; column 10, lines 55-66*),

the line fault detector providing the alarm processor with an alarm distribution request requesting to transmit the alarm transferring frame through a VLAN on which a fault has occurred when a line fault on the VLAN has been detected, and providing the alarm processor with an alarm distribution request requesting to transmit the alarm transferring frame through VLAN's except the VLAN on which a fault has

occurred when an alarm transferring frame has been received from another LAN switch (see Doherty; column 5, lines 15-28).

Conclusion

8. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

6. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from examiner should be directed to Jude Jean-Gilles whose telephone number is (571) 272-3914. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Thursday and every other Friday from 8:00 AM to 5:30 PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, David Wiley, can be reached on (571) 272-3923. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is (703) 305-3719.

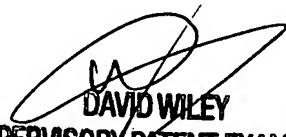
Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 305-3900.

Jude Jean-Gilles

Patent Examiner

Art Unit 2143

July 12, 2007



DAVID WILEY
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 2100